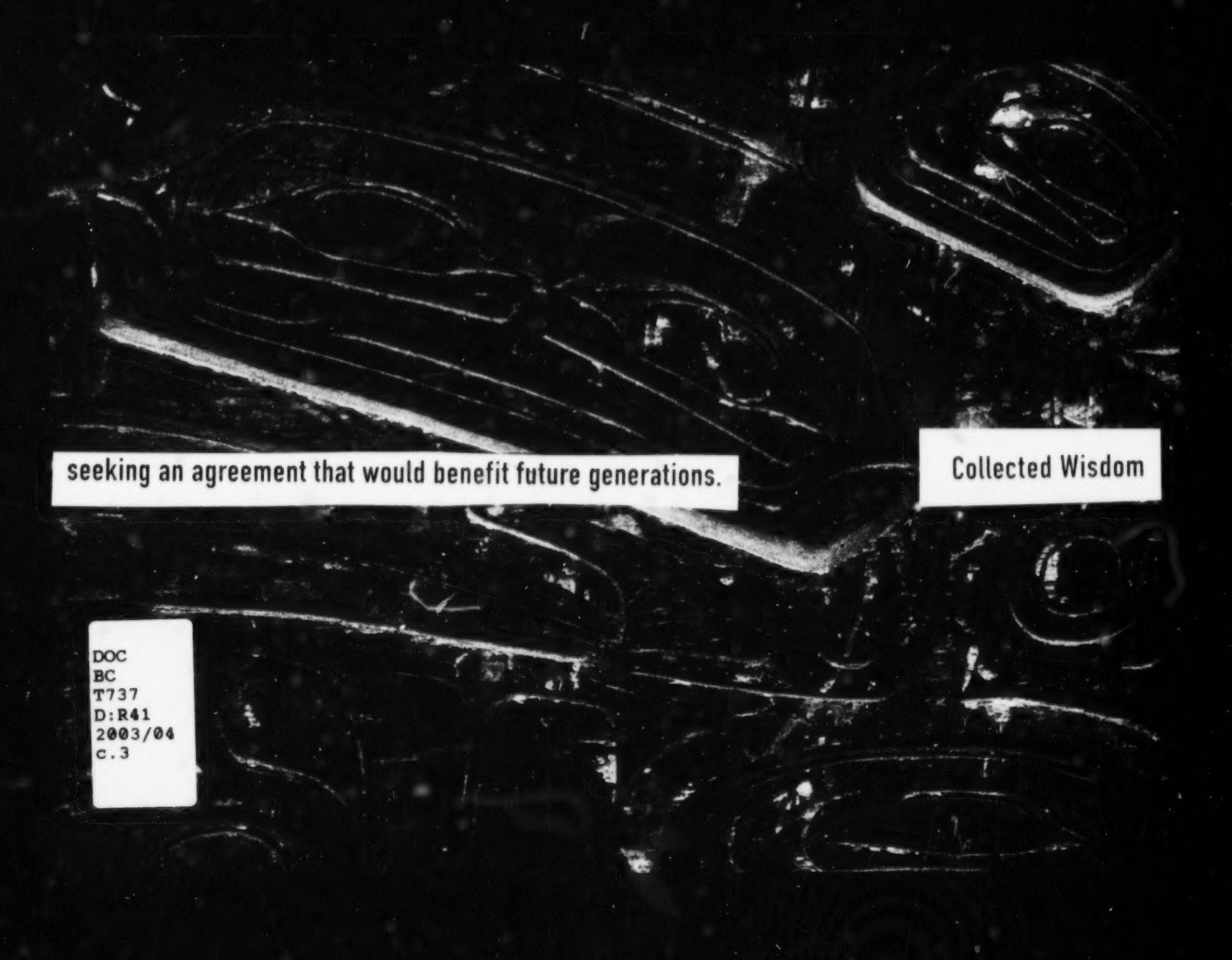


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On May 11, 2000, the Nisga'a Final Agreement went into effect, marking a new beginning for the Nisga'a Nation.

The governments of Canada, British Columbia, and the Nisga'a Nation are parties to the Nisga'a Final Agreement, which sets out Nisga'a Lands and the Nisga'a people's right of self-government. Because three governments share responsibility for the treaty, an Implementation Committee was formed to provide a forum for sharing information and ideas, and to ensure the treaty's implementation. This report—funded by the federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development—summarizes the progress made in the fourth year of the treaty, from April 1, 2003 to March 31, 2004.

Treaty
Negotiations
Office

Canada

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to the next through the spoken word. **Yuuhlimḵ'askw**

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In an oral culture, the true wealth of the nation flows from one generation

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Wilp Si'ayuukhl Nisga'a is the 39-member legislative body responsible for considering and passing Nisga'a Lisims Government laws. It includes every Officer of NLG, the Chief Councillor, Councillors of each Nisga'a village, and two elected representatives from each Nisga'a Urban Society (Nisga'a communities in Terrace, Prince Rupert / Port Edward, and Vancouver). The President, Secretary-Treasurer, and Chairperson are elected by all Nisga'a citizens while the Chief Councillor and Councillors are elected by Nisga'a citizens resident in each village. The executive consists of the Officers, the Chief Councillor of each Nisga'a Village Government, and one representative from each Nisga'a Urban Society. During the reporting period, there were four sittings of the Wilp Si'ayuukhl Nisga'a: June 3-5, 2003, October 7-9, 2003, January 28-30, 2004, and March 30-31, 2004.

The Nisga'a have always governed themselves according to Ayuukhl Nisga'a, the traditional laws and practices of the Nisga'a Nation. The Council of Elders provides guidance and interpretation of the Ayuuk to Nisga'a government. Composed of chiefs, matriarchs, and respected Nisga'a elders, the Council of Elders is appointed by NLG in accordance with Nisga'a law and the Nisga'a Final Agreement. The Chairperson of the Council of Elders is elected by all Nisga'a citizens.

Under the terms of the Nisga'a Final Agreement, Canada and British Columbia provide annual capital transfer payments to the Nisga'a Nation until 2014. During the reporting period, payments of $12,023,467.89 from Canada and $989,373.15 from British Columbia were made to the Nisga'a Nation. Nisga'a Lisims Government met its obligations by repaying $2 million toward its negotiation loan.

Under the Nisga'a Final Agreement, the *Indian Act* no longer applies to the Nisga'a people (except for the purpose of Indian Registration and certain transitional matters mentioned in the treaty). The treaty recognizes the Nisga'a people's right to govern their own affairs and puts to rest any uncertainty regarding ownership of Nisga'a Land. It creates new opportunities for co-operative, sustainable development.

Today, the Nisga'a Nation includes approximately 5,500 people who reside in the villages of Gingolx (Kincolith), Laxgalts'ap (Greenville), Gitwinksihlkw (Canyon City), and New Aiyansh, as well as the urban centres of Terrace, Prince Rupert/Port Edward, Vancouver, and over fifty other communities throughout North America. Under the Nisga'a Final Agreement, the Nisga'a Nation owns approximately 2,000 square kilometres of Nisga'a Lands in fee simple. Nisga'a citizens are entitled to fish in the Nass Area (approximately 26,838 square kilometres) and hunt in the Nass Wildlife Area (approximately 16,101 square kilometres).

The impact of the Nisga'a Final Agreement is felt far beyond the Nass Valley. The treaty is recognized as a milestone in the development of aboriginal self-government and is being studied around the world. It is a living testament to how governments and aboriginal peoples can, in good faith, work together to build a more secure future for everyone.

### Representative, Responsible Government

The Nisga'a Nation has the right to self-government and the authority to make laws. Nisga'a government is democratic, representative, and responsible to its citizens. It is composed of Nisga'a Lisims Government (NLG) and four Nisga'a Village Governments. Each Nisga'a Village acts through its Nisga'a Village Government in exercising its rights, powers and privileges, and in carrying out its duties, functions, and obligations.

The Nisga'a Nation was recognized as a self-governing entity on May 11, 2000, the Effective Date of the Nisga'a Final Agreement. Nisga'a elders played a key role in forging the treaty. Some were young when they joined the cause but grew old seeking an agreement they hoped would benefit future generations. A bold new venture in aboriginal governance, the Nisga'a Final Agreement is guided by generations of experience, vigilance, and wisdom.

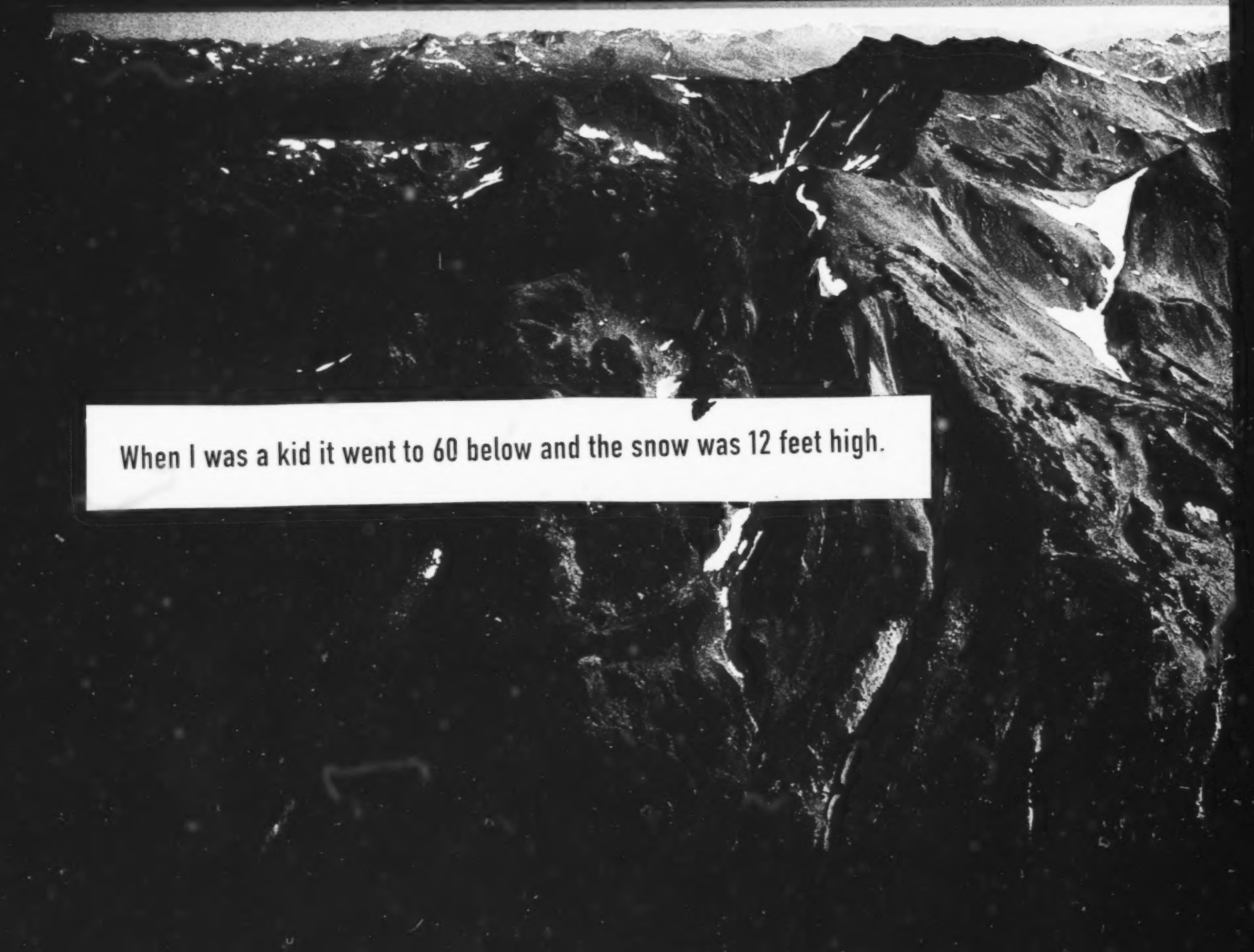
The implementation of the Nisga'a Final Agreement remains a work in progress. While significant achievements have been made in building Nisga'a government institutions and in managing Nisga'a Lands and resources, much remains to accomplish. Together with its partners in the governments of Canada and British Columbia, the Nisga'a Nation is working to ensure the treaty continues to honour the past while preparing for the challenges and opportunities of the future.

**Hli Gadihl Nisga'a / The Nisga'a Nation**

K'alii Aksim Lisims, the Nass River, flows nearly 400 kilometres from its headwaters in the Skeena Mountains to the coast of what is now known as Canada. The Nisga'a people have lived along the banks of this river since before recorded time.

When the Colony of British Columbia was created in 1858, Nisga'a territory was declared Crown land. In 1887, the Nisga'a people began petitioning government to recognise their ownership of, and rights to, Nisga'a territory. In 1998, the governments of Canada, British Columbia, and the Nisga'a Nation initialled the Nisga'a Final Agreement, which sets out Nisga'a Lands and the Nisga'a people's right to self-government. Following its ratification by each of the three parties, the Nisga'a Final Agreement went into effect on May 11, 2000. It is British Columbia's first modern treaty.

# A Land Reclaimed


When I was a kid it went to 60 below and the snow was 12 feet high.

106-00437/

In the Nisg̱a'a tradition, much of this wisdom is passed on during Yuuhlimk̲'askw, a formal process of advice-giving or counselling.

To help outsiders understand, Nisg̱a'a Elder Verna Williams tells a story from her youth. When an elder or parent saw a young person acting irresponsibly in the community, she says, they would wait until suppertime. When the youth began to eat his meal, the elder would gently describe what he saw, explain why it was the wrong thing to do, and suggest a proper course of action. This advice was given in the gentlest possible way, as a gift. If the youth was receptive, and took the advice to heart, his tears would fall into his food. By consuming the tears, the advice would stay with him.

Yuuhlimk̲'askw is guidance and education. It ensures the next generation is prepared to lead when their time comes. A central concept in Nisg̱a'a society, it is just one way of sharing the wisdom of the elders.

Nisga'a Lisims Government / Senior Level Executive

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Joseph Gosnell Sr.

Chester Moore Edmond Wright Herbert Morven

Les Clayton Harry Nyce Sr. Edward Allen Collier Azak Martin Gerstmar

Nisga'a Lisisms Government / Senior Level Executive

# As Long as the River Flows

The Nass, one of British Columbia's richest river systems, has always provided for the Nisga'a people. Ancient spawning ground of oolichan, steelhead, and five species of wild salmon, the Nass River remains the lifeblood of Nisga'a commerce and culture.

The Nisga'a Final Agreement sets out the right of the Nisga'a people to fish throughout 26,838 square kilometres of territory known as the Nass Area. Under the direction of Nisga'a Fisheries Department and pursuant to the Nisga'a Final Agreement, the Nass River is being managed as part of a modern, scientific fishery to provide a sustainable resource for the Nisga'a people today — and for generations to come.

## Fisheries Management

Under the Nisga'a Final Agreement, management of the Nisga'a fisheries is facilitated through the Joint Fisheries Management Committee (JFMC) which was established on May 11, 2000. The JFMC, which is comprised of representatives from Canada, British Columbia and the Nisga'a Fisheries Department, recommends the Nisga'a annual fishing plan to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

The Nisga'a Final Agreement allows for the commercial sale of salmon and this new revenue has enabled Nisga'a communities to benefit both culturally and economically. Nisga'a citizens participate in the Individual Sales Fishery, which allows for the commercial sale of fish by individual fishers, and the Communal Sales Fishery where fish are sold to fund the work of Nisga'a Fisheries Limited.

**Salmon harvested since 2000**

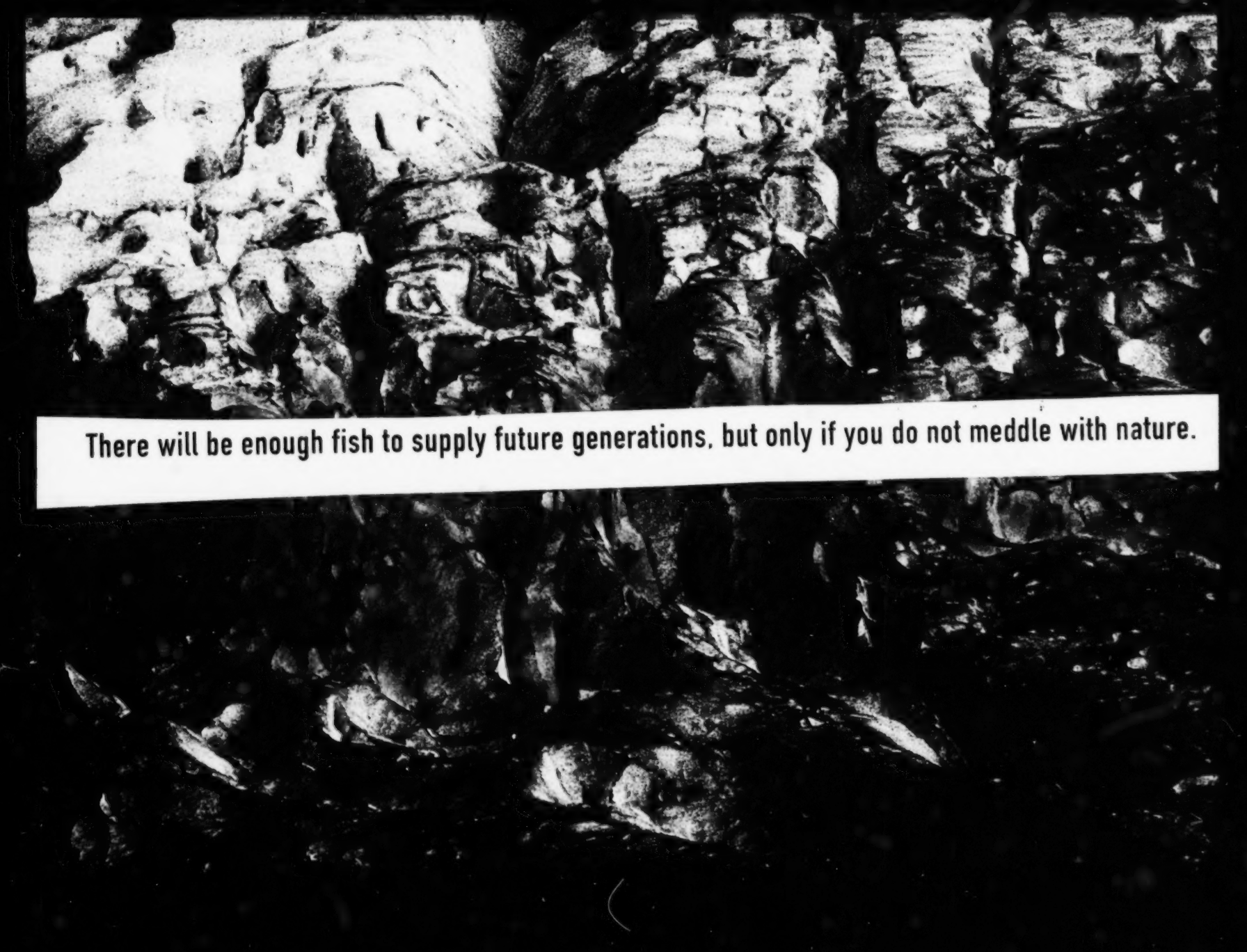
*in 2002 and 2003 both Sockeye and Coho were harvested*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **2000** | **Sockeye** | | **$900,000** |
| **2001** | **Sockeye** | | **$386,126** |
| **2002** | **Sockeye**<br>**Coho** | | **$833,781** |
| **2003** | **Sockeye**<br>**Coho** | | **$984,708** |

During the 2003 fishing season, 19 Individual Sale Fishery openings were held. Nisga'a Fisheries sold 371 Individual Sale permits to Nisga'a citizens, and offered an additional 66 permits free of charge to Nisga'a elders. A total of 95,601 salmon were caught, which represents $984,708.75 in revenue to Nisga'a fishers. The Communal Sales Fishery harvested 29,573 pieces of sockeye, generating $297,468.60 for Nisga'a Fisheries. The domestic food fishery, which is strictly for private use by Nisga'a citizens, totalled 39,198 salmon.

In season, Nisga'a Fisheries operates three landing sites on the Nass River and provides a tally person onboard a Canfisco packer operating in the vicinity of Gingolx. Nisga'a Fisheries is responsible for grading, counting and weighing salmon for payment, as well as sales of insulated fish totes (carriers) and the distribution of flaked ice to eligible Nisga'a fishers to ensure the best quality product. Nisga'a Fisheries transports all salmon to the central depot located at the Nisga'a fresh fish plant in New Aiyansh.

Prior to the start of the 2003 season, several vital construction projects were undertaken to meet Canadian Food Inspection Agency regulations and to increase production. Upgrades to the fresh fish plant included: paving of the entire lot, completion of a 38,000 gallon slush (water) tank for cleaning fish, two new water lines, a new processing table to increase the number of line workers and production, a pressurized hose for cleaning incoming fish totes, a security fence surrounding the fish plant properties, loading dock expansion to accommodate three trailers, and the addition of a cargo door. During the reporting period, Nisga'a Fisheries' Old Aiyansh landing site was repaired and improved to mitigate damage by flooding on the Nass River.


There will be enough fish to supply future generations, but only if you do not meddle with nature.

**Stock Assessment**

In 2002, Nisga'a Fisheries was contracted by DFO to assess the Dungeness crab population in Areas 3-12 (Kincolith and Nass Bay) and 3-18 (Iceberg Bay). The objectives of the two-year study were to collect biological data and to assess the crab population and distribution in the Nass Estuary before and after the annual commercial fishery. In November 2003, a final document was delivered to the Pacific Science Advice Review Committee (PSARC) and is available to the public. This preliminary assessment concluded that the Dungeness crab population in the Nass Estuary is healthy and productive, and that the existing commercial fishery is sustainable and does not have a significant negative effect on the resource.

Nisga'a Fisheries continued a study (first initiated in 2002) of shellfish species within the Nisga'a bivalve harvest area to assess their distribution, abundance, and biomass. This data will assist in the annual management of the harvested species and help ensure that the domestic needs of the Nisga'a Nation are met.

The Nass River fish wheels continue to operate and provide escapement data for salmon and steelhead. Six fish wheels, designed and built by Nisga'a Fisheries, are in operation in the Gitwinksihlkw and in the Grease Harbour areas. This project — in conjunction with escapement enumeration and tag recovery programs at the Meziadin Fishway and other interior streams — provides reliable sockeye, chinook and coho escapement estimates for the Nass watershed.

During the reporting period, British Columbia partnered with Nisga'a Lisims Government to fund a population estimate for summer steelhead returning to the Nass. Steelhead are assessed every third year.

K'alli Aksim Lisims — the Nass River — home to oolichan, steelhead and five species of wild salmon.

# Lisims

### Environmental Certification

Nisga'a Fisheries continued the certification process of the Nass River by the European Marine Stewardship Council. Certification of the Nass River has been delayed to allow the Fraser and Skeena Rivers to be certified concurrently. The Marine Stewardship Council's credential on a product is an internationally recognized symbol that certifies that a river and fishery are environmentally sound.

### Hydro Electric Power Generation

Like many rivers in British Columbia, Nisga'a waterways possess untapped energy potential. Under terms of the Nisga'a Final Agreement, the Nisga'a Nation is able to investigate the hydroelectric power capacity of unrecorded waters in streams (other than the Nass River) that flow wholly or partially within Nisga'a Lands.

In early 2003, Nisga'a Lisims Government began working with a small hydro development company to explore the feasibility of small "run of river" hydro projects on Nisga'a Lands. Stream flow data on four streams was collected for one year and was assessed in November 2003. The company reviewed the hydrology report and concluded that the watersheds studied did not fit within their business model. However, there is a strong likelihood that some (if not all) of these streams are economically viable micro-hydro opportunities.

In the fall of 2003, NLG established independent flow stations on three other steams to measure feasibility for hydro opportunities. Working with a consulting company, NLG will gather data for one year, then integrate all available data to identify the feasibility of both domestic and commercial "green" hydro projects. NLG has applied to Canada's Resource Access Negotiations program to cover the costs of feasibility studies for these projects.

# Txaa K'anlaxhatkw The Sky is Clearing

Joshua Sidney Alexander **Age: 80. Tribe: Raven. Home: Gingolx.**

I started fishing with my grandfather when I was eight years old. I was the motor; I rowed for him. We had no gas stove and all that jazz. We used an empty four gallon can to make a fire for his tea or coffee. You couldn't get warm. I fished with my grandfather until I was 10. When he died, I fished with my uncles.

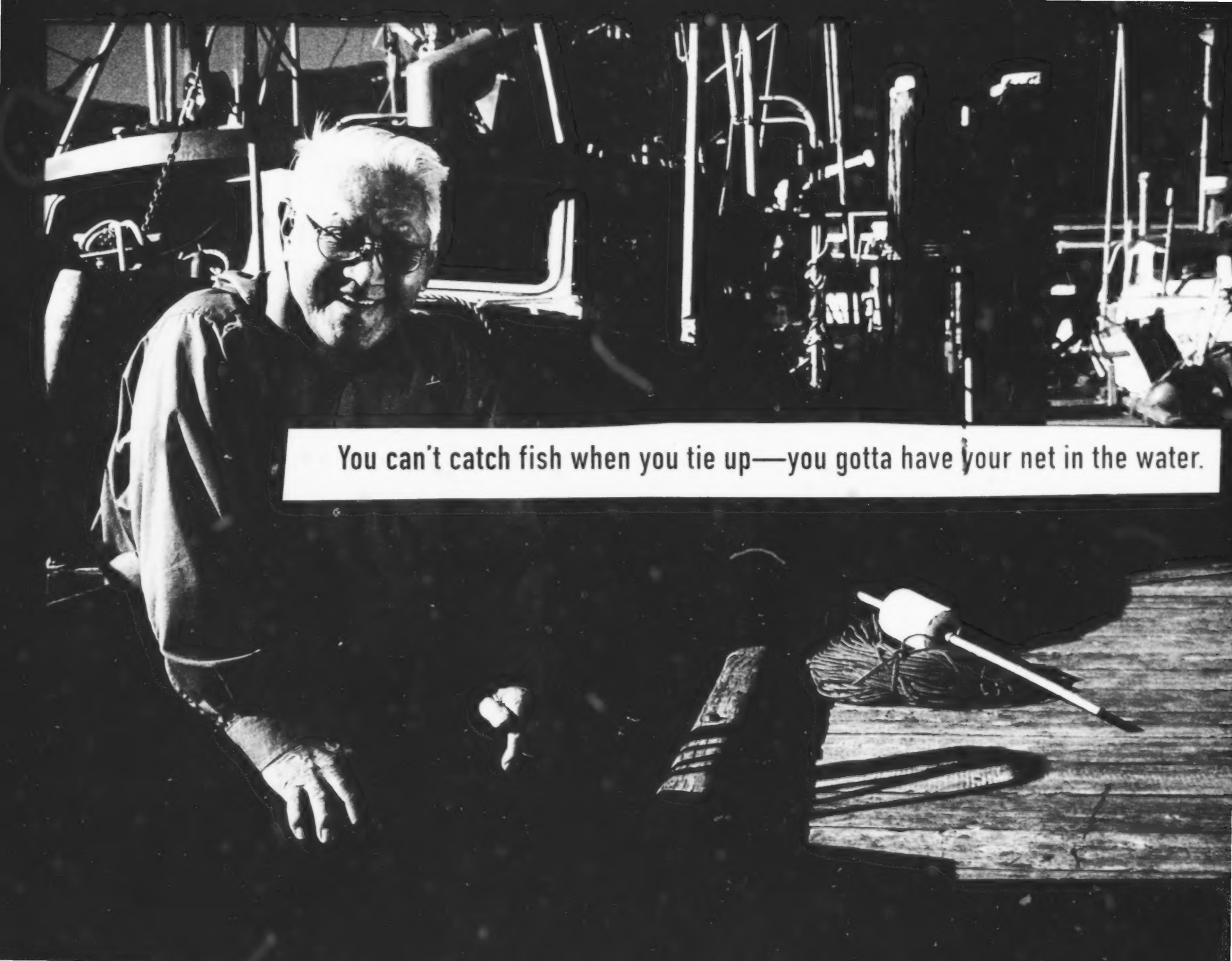
I had to quit school because my dad left us all alone. There were three of us kids with my mother. In Grade Five, I went to Alaska and got a job on a herring boat. I made $900 in one month. That was quite a bit for those days. I wasn't even 13 at the time. I lied about my age. I had to do something because I was starving. We were having hot water for breakfast and just a little piece of dried fish for dinner. When I came home, I got a whole bunch of groceries for my mother and I left her $500. When she saw the money and groceries, she fainted. After that, I worked here in the inlet... I wasn't just a fisherman, I also logged for about 55 years. I would fish in the summer and log in the winter.

We had four boys and six girls. Fishing provided a good living for my family. But you have to go at it the right way. You can't catch fish when you tie up—you gotta have your net in the water. Work, work, work. I learned to give it my utmost. The other thing I learned was how to get along with everybody. No matter what color, creed, or race. They are the same as me. I take 'em as my brothers because I bleed if I get cut, and they bleed if they get cut. My grandfather taught me that. He said, 'Gilo ji mi tl'iga'adih silgadin', 'don't look down on your fellow man.'

There aren't as many fish as there were in the old days. A long time ago, right in this spot, I got 1,400 salmon in one set. In those days, there were a lot of fish. Now, I'm worried about over-fishing. There will be enough fish to supply future generations, but only if you do not meddle with nature. Once human beings meddle with nature, the fish will gradually go away.

I heard talk about them building the (Kincolith) road for 70 years, but now we finally have it. Now we get to see our neighbours in Greenville, New Aiyansh, Prince Rupert, and Terrace. A long time ago, it used to take me eight hours to go down to Rupert in my gill netter. That was before the ferry came. I think it's a heck of a big difference with this road in.

I'm lucky to be alive at 80, because a lot of people don't even make 70. I had a quadruple bypass about five years ago. I'm still around yet. And I still go out fishing when I want to—I'll never give up.


You can't catch fish when you tie up—you gotta have your net in the water.

# Family Trees

For countless generations, Nisga'a carvers have favoured red cedar for producing majestic totem poles that tell of clan and family relationships. Through craftsmanship and tradition, the wood is transformed into an expression of Nisga'a art and culture. Red cedar — known as Simgan, or Sacred Tree — is just one of the valuable species that thrive on Nisga'a Lands.

The Nisga'a Final Agreement is about more than rights and responsibilities. It is a recognition of the deep and abiding connection of a people to their place.

**Forest Management**

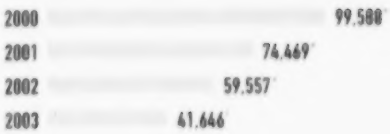
The Nisga'a Final Agreement recognizes Nisga'a ownership of Nisga'a Lands and the forest resources on those lands. It also requires that Nisga'a forestry practices meet or exceed standards established under provincial forestry practices legislation for Crown land. Nisga'a Lisims Government is committed to building a modern, sustainable forest industry.

During the first five years of the treaty, control of timber harvesting and management on Nisga'a Lands shifts from British Columbia to Nisga'a Lisims Government. During the transition period, B.C. licences the harvest of timber to forest companies who held licences prior to the treaty's effective date. Responsibility for the administration of these licences is shared between the province and NLG. During the reporting period, NLG's Forest Resources Department worked to prepare for the end of the transition period and full control of forest resources in May 2005.

The last few years have been difficult ones for B.C.'s forest industry, particularly in the north. Global market conditions and the on-going U.S. softwood lumber dispute continued to have a negative impact on the industry. During the reporting

**Cubic metres of timber harvested since 2000**

**155,000 cu m allowable harvest, *135,000 cu m allowable harvest*




period, solvency questions continued to linger over the main tenure holder on Nisga'a Lands. As a result, logging operations on Nisga'a Lands were minimal. Forest companies, under licences issued by the province, harvested 41,646 cubic metres of timber from Nisga'a Lands — much of it by community-owned Laxgalts'ap Forest Corporation. Under the transition agreement, forest companies are licensed to harvest specified volumes of timber each year and a percentage of volume must be contracted to Nisga'a citizens to harvest. The target of 70 per cent Nisga'a contractors was exceeded during the fourth year of the treaty.

For timber harvested on Nisga'a lands, British Columbia transferred quarterly Same Economic Position (SEP) payments, totalling $251,265, to Nisga'a Lisims Government. Under the SEP arrangement, NLG receives payments equivalent to those they would have received if they managed the timber themselves. 2003 was the first year of the "dual scale contract" which values timber based on a blend of coastal and interior log values and grades. Basic silviculture, as required by the *Nisga'a Forest Act*, began in the spring of 2004. Levies totalling $140,732 were collected to finance the reforestation of harvested blocks.

The collection of "base mapping" information was completed during the reporting period. This project has provided NLG with the information needed to correct and upgrade forest inventory information, customize inventory of wildlife and cultural forest values, and enable the creation of detailed management plans and assessments. The cost of the project was approximately $100,000.

A forest health issue (dothistroma needle rust) emerged as a threat to pine plantations on approximately 3,700 hectares of Nisga'a Lands. During the reporting period, British Columbia worked to mitigate damage to 3,200 hectares while NLG assumed responsibility for the remaining 500 hectares.

The Forest Practices Board is mandated to conduct an annual audit on Nisga'a Lands during the five-year transition period. The third audit was carried out in July 2003 and covered activities conducted from August 17, 2002 — July 18, 2003. A report was released in June 2004 and is available on the Forest Practices Board website at www.fpb.gov.bc.ca.

### Forestry Transition Committee

The Forestry Transition Committee approves forest development plans throughout the five-year transition period. Comprised of one person each from Nisga'a Lisims Government and B.C., the committee approves the silviculture plan for harvesting and issues all cutting and road permits in the latter years of the transition period.

The Forestry Transition Committee did not meet during the reporting period as operational plan approvals for harvesting and roads were in place from the previous year. There was no demand for new approvals as a much reduced level of activity occurred while the major forest tenure holder continued its restructuring and investment efforts.

### Botanical Forest Resources

With the exception of timber harvesting during the transition period, NLG's Lands and Resources Directorate manages all land and forest resources in Nisga'a forests. Pine mushrooms, a popular delicacy in Asia, are a valuable forest resource on Nisga'a lands.

During the reporting period, more detailed harvest volume information was collected. Approximately 45,360 kilograms of mushrooms were harvested from Nisga'a Lands, more than double the previous year. However, the season was characterized by very low prices throughout the region. The annual mushroom harvest added approximately

**Mushrooms harvested since 2000**
*kilograms harvested, revenue to the local economy*

| | |
|---|---|
| 2000 | 13,620 kg |
| 2001 | 27,216 kg |
| 2002 | 23,800 kg |
| 2003 | 45,360 kg |

$1 million to the local economy while permit sales and surcharges provided approximately $80,000 towards the management of the program.

A request for proposals was issued to find partners to help NLG build a more stable and productive industry, and to improve the way Nisga'a botanical forest resources are protected and marketed.

### Wildlife Management

The Nass Wildlife Committee, a tripartite body created under the Nisga'a Final Agreement, provides advice about wildlife management and harvest within the 16,101 square kilometre Nass Wildlife Area. British Columbia uses this information to establish the total annual harvest levels and approve the annual Nass Wildlife Management Plan. During the reporting period, the Wildlife Committee met regularly to discuss scientific panel recommendations and back-country recreation referrals. The Committee recommended total allowable harvest levels of moose (225), mountain goat (137), and grizzly bear (5) for the year. The NFA establishes the levels of annual Nisga'a harvest as a percentage of these total allowable harvest levels.

Nine referrals were sent to the Nass Wildlife Committee during the reporting period. These included four quarry licence applications and one general industrial licence application for activities associated with the removal and storage of sand and gravel. The remaining four referrals were for commercial recreation licence applications. These applications were for a variety of outdoor recreational pursuits, including fly-fishing, heli-skiing, nature tours, and river rafting.

# Gadim Ga̱ldoo'o Man in the Woods

Charles Alexander **Age: 74. Tribe: Raven / Frog. Home: Greenville.**

I started hand-logging at the age of 14. We used to use crosscut saws; they were nine feet long. There was some big wood in those days. It took about an hour and a half to cut just one tree.

We were there all summer. They gave us all the tools and came in with groceries on a float plane twice a month. It was tough work. The old guys were using bear fat on their arms and necks to keep the mosquitoes away. You had to keep moving and work really hard the whole day. That's the trick for keeping the flies away.

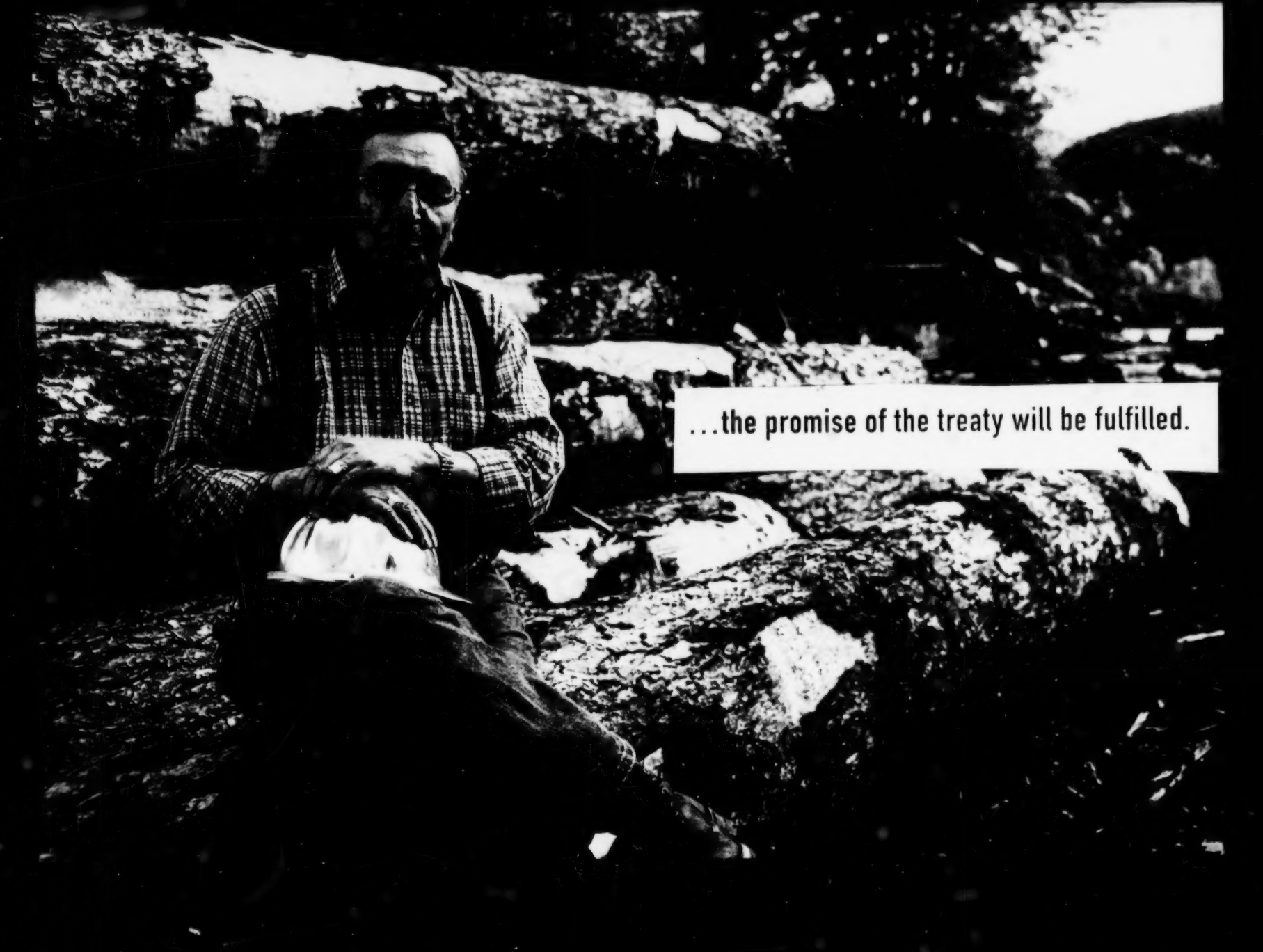
I never got paid for six months but when I did, I got 1800 bucks. It was like 18,000 in my time. They wouldn't give it to us up here, we had to travel by boat ten hours to Prince Rupert. We'd never seen so much money in our lives. I cashed my cheque and bought a suitcase. I put all the money in there and gave the suitcase to my mother. When she opened it and saw all that money, she cried.

I learned to use the chainsaw in the early 1940s. It was so cold we had to leave the machines running the whole night. When I was a kid it went to 60 below and the snow was 12 feet high. We get nothing like that now-a-days. Now, you see young guys wearing shorts in the middle of winter… Back then, if you left your saw outside in the box of the truck, it would freeze. When you got out, you'd have to run your saw right away and keep it idling while you walked in the woods. Then you started dropping trees. I would drop 200–300 trees a day. I logged for 33 years; mostly falling trees. I was also a foreman at the sawmill in Prince George.

The big companies cleaned out the big trees—number ones and number twos. It will take a while before we log the big stuff again. Maybe in another 10 or 14 years. It takes 40 years before you can cut the trees they planted. But when things pick up, they won't have to spend too much money; the road is already there. After I'm gone I guess my sons and nephews will have an easier time… Nisga'a ownership of the land and trees will make a difference.

I'd like to see some young men learn how to survey in the bush and grade a tree while it's still standing. We have fallers and machine operators, but we need to send people for education. We need more education in all fields. I'd like to see them take the younger generation to the (government) meetings and record what they're doing. It's called yuuhlimk̲'askw, educating the nephews. That way, by the time the chief is gone, the nephews will know. Yuuhlimk̲'askw. It's a good example from our culture. It's our way.

In the lead-up to the treaty, I went to every meeting. I never missed one. Has it been worth it? I'd say yes. But everyone is brand new to this. It will take a few years before they work it out. In the future, the promise of the treaty will be fulfilled.


...the promise of the treaty will be fulfilled.

After I'm gone I guess my sons and nephews will have an easier time...

## Lands Management

The Lands Department of NLG is responsible for the management of all Nisga'a Lands and land assets. This includes the approximately 2,000 square kilometres that make up Nisga'a Lands as identified in the Nisga'a Final Agreement, and certain other properties that belong to the Nisga'a Nation. NLG's Land Use Plan for Nisga'a Lands was approved and adopted in December 2002. During its first year in effect, the plan served as a guide for land use decisions on Nisga'a Lands.

Fieldwork for the New Aiyansh Special Survey was completed during the reporting period, as well as surveys of the Gingolx and Gitwinksihlkw expansion lands. These surveys were undertaken by a firm committed to maximizing Nisga'a employment. Members of the field staff were hired in the communities surveyed and, where possible, goods and services were purchased in those communities.

The Fishery Bay shoreline on the Nass River was stabilized during the reporting period. Now that the construction of the bank is complete, a monitoring program will be undertaken to determine the efficacy of the habitat enhancement and replacement measures.

NLG's Directorate of Lands and Resources continued to work in conjunction with the North Coast Land and Resource Management Planning process. An initiative of British Columbia, this process is intended to plan for the use of Crown Land in the North Coast area. Although Nisga'a Lands were not included in the planning area, policies developed through the planning process could affect Nisga'a Lands, commercial recreation tenures, and other interests in the areas of Portland Canal and Observatory Inlet.

**Nisga'a carvers, since the beginning of time, have favoured Red cedar — Simgan, the Sacred Tree for their work.**

# Simgan

### Anhluut'ukwsim Laxmihl Angwinga'asanskwhl Nisga'a / Nisga'a Memorial Lava Bed Park

Nisga'a Memorial Lava Bed Park is jointly managed by NLG and British Columbia through the Joint Park Management Committee (JPMC). Established in 1992, the committee continues under provisions of the Nisga'a Final Agreement. During the reporting period, the committee discussed the next phase of road construction and the need to mitigate any further impacts to lava beds. In addition, a long-term contract for the management of park services was tendered and three proposals were received. The winning proponent was a Nisga'a citizen from Gitwinksihlkw.

During the 2003 season, 282 camping parties used the campground at Nisga'a Memorial Lava Bed Park, an increase of 2.17% over the previous season.

### Nisga'a Museum

Nisga'a Lisims Government is currently in the design and planning stages of building a museum of Nisga'a history, culture, and art. During the reporting period, criteria were developed for possible building sites and NLG invited proposals from firms interested in designing the museum. Vancouver-based David Nairne and Associates was selected and awarded the contract in December, 2003. A work plan and budget was negotiated to complete the first stage of concept development and a feasibility study, and this work formally began in March 2004.

### Wilp Sy'oon

Wilp Sy'oon (House of Glacier) fishing lodge opened for business in 1996. Offering visitors remote wilderness fishing holidays, Wilp Sy'oon is accessible only by boat or floatplane. The lodge is located approximately 30 kilometres south of Gingolx near Pearse Island and enjoys a loyal and growing clientele.

# One Heart, Many Hands

At the centre of Nisga'a culture is the concept of Saytkil'im Goot, or One Heart, which stipulates that everything in Nisga'a society — from resources to responsibilities — is owned collectively by the Nisga'a people. It is a way of thinking that ensures everyone has a chance to share in the wealth of the nation while contributing to the care of the community.

The Nisga'a Final Agreement is designed to promote Nisga'a responsibility for education, training, health, and social services. Nisga'a Lisims Government is dedicated to meeting this challenge by delivering programs and services that reflect and respect Nisga'a culture and tradition.

## Programs & Services

The Programs and Services department of Nisga'a Lisims Government works to improve community life by providing convenient and quality public programs and services for Nisga'a citizens. Canada, British Columbia, and the Nisga'a Nation negotiate and agree on a Fiscal Financing Agreement (FFA) by which funds are provided to the Nisga'a Nation for the provision of programs and services to Nisga'a citizens and, where applicable, non-Nisga'a occupants of Nisga'a Lands. Under this agreement, Canada transferred $38,072,353 to Nisga'a Lisims Government for the support and delivery of programs and services during the reporting period.

In the fourth year of the treaty, representatives of British Columbia and NLG met to discuss the province's *Community Charter Act*. Amendments to the *Local Government Act* were made and the *Community Charter Act* was enacted to ensure certain powers of the Nisga'a government remain parallel to those of municipalities in specific areas as detailed under the Nisga'a Final Agreement.

### Nisga'a Valley Health Authority

The Nisga'a Valley Health Authority (NVHA) provides health services to people within Health Area 92. These include: physician and dental services; public health, home, and community care services; a treatment room nurse; mental health services; and Non-Insured Health Benefits for Nisga'a within Canada. The NVHA consists of six elected board members representing each of the four Nisga'a communities, the non-Nisga'a community, and Nisga'a Lisims Government.

During the reporting period, the Nisga'a Valley Health Authority continued to provide health services to Nisga'a communities as outlined in the Transitional Funding Agreement. Nisga'a Lisims Government allocated 26% of the FFA ($9,402,223) from Canada to the board for the delivery of healthcare services. British Columbia contributed $1,582,695 specifically for physician, diagnostic, and treatment services. British Columbia also provides advisory support for managing healthcare budgets, planning to enhance primary healthcare services, setting priorities, and developing collaborative planning with the Northern Health Authority.

### Nisga'a Child & Family Services

The Nisga'a Nation has entered into a delegation agreement with British Columbia in which responsibility for child protection services for Nisga'a children at risk is gradually being transferred to Nisga'a Lisims Government. Under the Nisga'a Final Agreement, Nisga'a Lisims Government reserves the right to enact laws in respect of child and family services on Nisga'a Lands.

As NLG assumes more responsibility for child protection, Nisga'a Child and Family Services (NCFS) is meeting the challenge with seven fulltime staff members dedicated to helping children in need. Serving as an advocate for families and children in crisis, NCFS offers various family support and recreation programs in Nisga'a villages and operates a care home in Terrace for Nisga'a children in foster care. NCFS solicits advice from the four communities through the Joint Management Committee, which includes representatives from the village governments, Community Resources Committee, and social development workers.

Through the FFA, Canada provides funding for Nisga'a Child and Family Services. In addition, British Columbia provided a $395,000 contribution for NCFS as well as an additional $25,000 to support Perry's Place Family Reunification Program. Perry's Place is a residence that allows children in care to be supervised by a contracted caregiver while the parent resides in a suite within the home. The caregiver works with both the child and parent to help facilitate family reintegration.

During the reporting period, NCFS opened an office in Prince Rupert and began transferring case files from provincial counterparts. Throughout the province, there are over 150 Nisga'a children in care. Nisga'a children who require protection are placed in Nisga'a extended families according to the Ayuuk.

Tragically, there were over a dozen attempted suicides in Nisga'a communities during the reporting period and some of these were successful. This issue is of the utmost concern for Nisga'a Lisims Government. To address this problem, Nisga'a Lisims Government has provided each village administering authority a minimum of $150,000 annually as a preventative measure exclusively for youth and family programs. In addition, NCFS applied for and received $50,000 to fund "Taking Back Our Future" — a project created to provide an accessible and culturally-appropriate suicide prevention network in Nisga'a communities.

### Primary & Secondary Education

On Nisga'a Lands, K-12 education is provided by British Columbia through provincial School District #92 (Nisga'a). The school board, consists of four Nisga'a members and one non-Nisga'a member. Nisga'a Lisims Government works in partnership with the district to foster and protect Nisga'a language and culture. Approximately 560 Nisga'a students are enrolled in bicultural and bilingual courses.

While more Nisga'a people have post-secondary degrees than ever before, the rate of high school graduation is unacceptably low. However, improvements are being made. During the reporting period, the Grade 12 graduation rate improved from 39% to 65% in School District #92. In less than three years, students in the district have improved over 30% in provincial test scores. While many students were working at or above the provincial level during the reporting period, the district is committed to the goal of having the majority of its students meet or exceed provincial standards.

# K̲'alii X̲s'ootkw Quiet Water When Paddling

**Doris Tait Age: 73. Tribe. Raven. Home: New Aiyansh.**

I was the first CHR (Community Health Representative) in the old village. We needed to have this training in the community. I could speak both languages, so I went for training in 1968.

I delivered the first baby before I had a chance to train as a CHR. A woman was in labour and I was called to help. I did what I had to do. I boiled and sterilized everything I needed. I cut the umbilical cord and I did everything that had to be done. I knew what to do because I already had one of my own at home. There were no complications; it was a boy. He is a man now and he has his own kids. I'm always thankful when I see him.

In those days my husband and I were the ones who brought people to the hospital in Terrace. We had to bring people in by boat. Sometimes we had to stay overnight, at our own expense. We did have a nurse in the village for a while, but her place was washed downriver in a flood. She left because she had nowhere to see patients. After that, we only had a visiting nurse every two weeks.

Sometimes we had to bring pregnant women into town in the back of the RCMP wagon, and sometimes the babies were born on the road. Those were the happy memories, with the babies. But we also had people who died in accidents. It was an emotional job, but I thank God I was able to do those things.

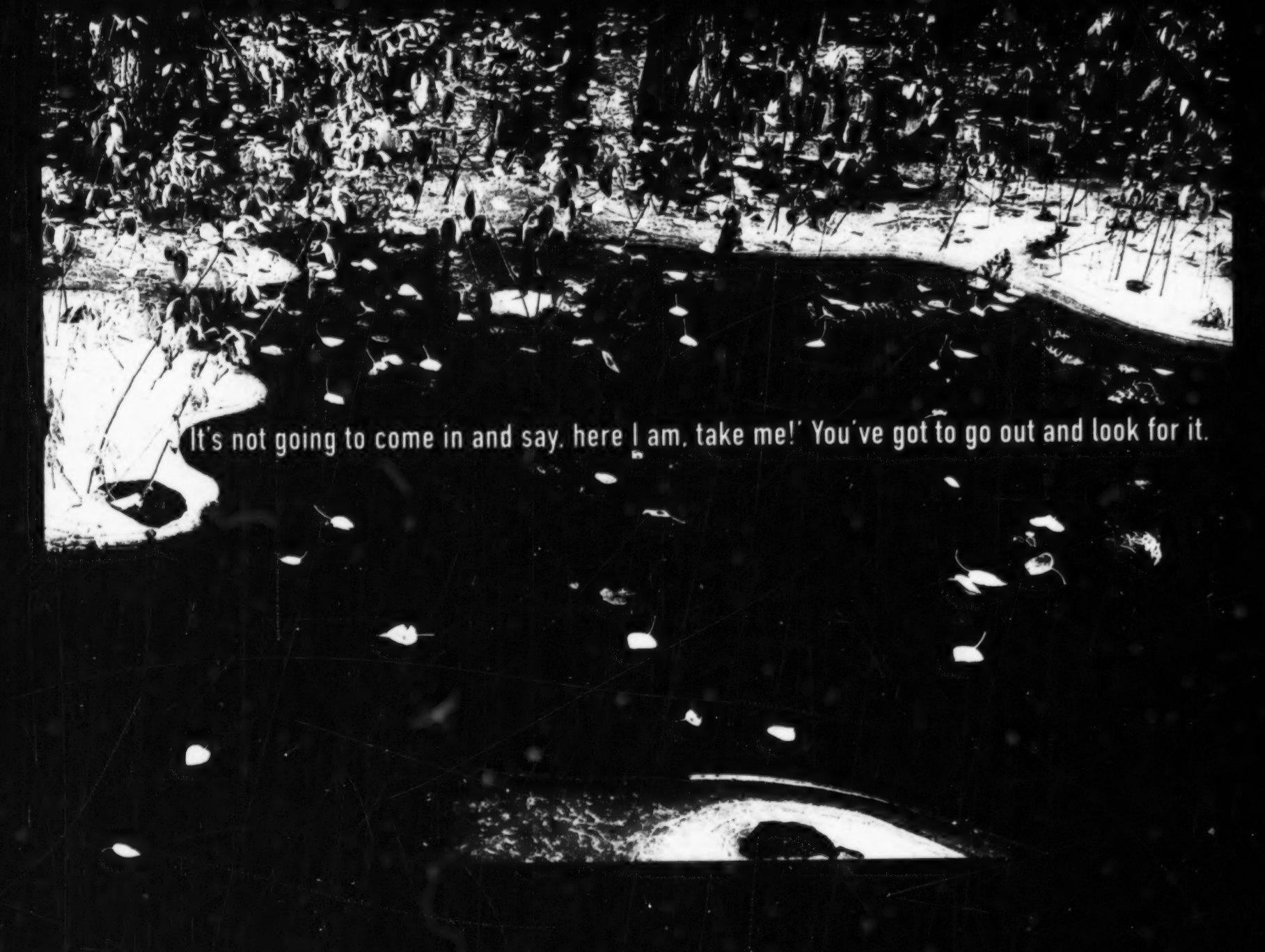
Since the treaty, we're able to make better decisions regarding healthcare. Before, the federal government told us what to do. Now we can make our own decisions about what we need. Overall, the treaty has been good for our people, but there is still a lot that needs to change.

These days, diabetes is a big problem in our community. I blame our diet. People are just buying food from the stores instead of growing their own and eating off the land. There are fast food places and a lot of fatty foods. Time and time again, people have been told to pay more attention to diet and eat better food.

Now I'm a member of the Council of Elders. The Council of Elders advises government on what they should be doing in accordance with our culture. Right now we're working on the Ayuuk̲ (traditional Nisga'a laws and practices), writing it down so future generations will have access to it. Many of our young people have jobs outside the community and don't speak our language. It's important that they have a chance to know and understand our traditions.

Now we can make our own decisions about what we need.

Our ancestors said, 'Go outside and you'll find something


It's not going to come in and say, here I am, take me!' You've got to go out and look for it.

**Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a**

Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a (House of Wisdom) offers Nisga'a-based post-secondary programs in Nisga'a communities and Urban Societies. Serving both Nisga'a and non-Nisga'a students, Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a (WWN) partners with a number of public institutions for the delivery of programs. Scholars from around the world have come to the Nass Valley to study at this institution of higher learning. During the reporting period, Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a celebrated its tenth anniversary and officially became a Nisga'a public institution with the enacting of the *WWN Institute Act* by Nisga'a Lisims Government.

Through a federation agreement with the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), WWN offers a Bachelor of Arts in First Nations Studies, Nisga'a. Through an affiliation agreement with Northwest Community College, WWN offers vocational and technical training, Grade 12 achievement, and university/college preparation.

Since 1994, WWN students have gone on to earn 13 Bachelor of Arts degrees, one Bachelor of Commerce degree, 26 Nisga'a Studies certificates, 17 First Nations Studies certificates, and one First Nations Language certificate. WWN also offers vocational-technical and continuing education programs, and a Northern Advancement program that helps new university entrants prepare for academic success.

During the reporting period, WWN was busy developing plans for its next ten years. These include: exploring the possibility of building a campus with faculty and student housing (and daycare); continued course development in the First Nations Studies program; creating a Nisga'a Language Teacher Training Certificate program; expanding college level

**Nisga'a children are born into a culture where it is understood that the T'ist'isit — elders — are respected by all.**

# T'ist'isit

vocational, technical, and trades programs; developing a Nisga'a Recreation and Tourism program; and developing an Archival and Curatorial Studies program.

WWN's annual budget is $1.3 million. During the reporting period, NLG contributed $200,000 for post-secondary education. Under the FFA, Canada and B.C. contributed $200,000 and $226,000 respectively for the support of post-secondary education and training programs.

In addition, NLG funds students pursuing post-secondary education in other institutions throughout British Columbia and North America.

### Ayuukhl Nisga'a Department

The Ayuukhl Nisga'a Department (AND) of Nisga'a Lisims Government is entrusted with the preservation and promotion of Nisga'a language, culture, and history. This is accomplished by encouraging research and understanding, respecting traditional ownership of Nisga'a history and adaawak (stories belonging to a Nisga'a wilp or house) and conserving this heritage through research.

AND is a partner in the Royal British Columbia Museum Custodial Agreement, the National Museum of the American Indian Exhibit, and the Royal Ontario Museum Project. On Nisga'a Lands, AND works with the Ad Hoc Committee on National Symbols, the NLG Building Art Committee, the Museum Planning Technical Team, and serves as the resource department for the Council of Elders.

During the reporting period, AND was involved in a landmark project: producing the first written transcription of the Ayuukhl Nisga'a, the collected laws and wisdom of the Nisga'a people.

# Ts'aa Gabin To Suddenly Surface

**Verna Williams Age: 66. Tribe: Raven / Frog. Home: New Aiyansh.**

When I was a child, I was sent away to Crosby Girls' School in Port Simpson. During all that time at residential school, I did not lose our language—I was one of the stubborn ones.

One day back in 1976 or 77, when my kids were small, I got a call from Bert McKay (Director of the school's language department). He wanted me to teach the language. I showed up at the school but I had no clue. I wasn't trained for anything. I walked into this classroom and my knees were knocking. The second time, I had a little more confidence.

I learned through on-the-job-training and by working with professionals. We were getting courses from UBC and professors were flying into New Aiyansh to help us teach the language. Now I've been teaching for 30 years.

Then I saw a position available here at WWN. I thought, I'll teach Nisga'a to the parents and maybe they will speak it to their kids. I think language begins at home when you're small. I did a little pilot project with my granddaughter and she can speak long sentences. When my daughter saw how well her daughter was doing, she decided to keep it up at home. That's the only way—catch them when they're small.

I think the people see WWN as a place they can get an education and not have to go so far away. They don't have to move anywhere to start their education. WWN helps keep the community together. When people see their friends and family succeeding, they say, 'I can do it too.' It gives a lot of encouragement to the people. It catches on. If WWN existed when I was a young woman, I would have come.

Having the treaty is a good thing. It will be good for the future generation. A lot of people are wondering when the changes will come, but it won't happen overnight. There's a lot of work to do. People in the community need to know more about the treaty. When we get the new generation of educated people—people with degrees—then we will see change. The more educated our people become, the more our treaty will go forward.

If other First Nations are wondering if it's worth pursuing a treaty, I say go for it! But get an education—that's the key.

When people see their friends and family succeeding, they say, 'I can do it too.'

# Right of Way

Freedom of movement is taken for granted in most southern communities. The ability to travel for work, medical services, or family reunions has a direct impact on the quality of life. For many Nisga'a citizens, this freedom has only just arrived. Access to safe, reliable transportation and modern telecommunications is essential for success in the 21st Century. That's why Canada, British Columbia, and Nisga'a Lisims Government are working together to help bring Nisga'a people closer to each other — and a world of opportunity.

### The Nisga'a Highway Upgrade Project

Funded by British Columbia, the Nisga'a Highway Upgrade Project has been ongoing since 1999. At the conclusion of the seven-year, $52 million program, the Nisga'a Highway will have been upgraded from a gravel logging road to an all-weather, two lane highway that meets a 70 kilometre per hour standard. The project has already provided Nass Valley residents and local resource industries with greater safety, reduced travel time, better access to other B.C. communities, and economic development through increased tourism and more efficient movement of goods and services.

During the reporting period, the 10.5 kilometre Lava Lake segment and the 10.7 kilometre segment between Laxgalts'ap and W.D. McKay Bridge were completed. Construction began on the 7.3 kilometre segment between Kwinyarh Creek and the Lava Beds, as well as the one kilometre Ginlulak access to W.D. McKay Bridge.

### Nisga'a Highway Kincolith Extension Project

A remote coastal community, Gingolx (Kincolth) was previously accessible only by boat or float plane. Outside of summer months, rough weather resulted in numerous accidents transporting people and goods to and from the village. During the reporting period, this isolation ended as Gingolx officially joined the North American road network.

The 29 kilometre road connecting Gingolx to Laxgalt'sap (Greenville) was completed in December, 2002. Built under a tripartite agreement between Canada, British Columbia, and Nisga'a Lisims Government, the total cost of the project was $34 million. On May 17, 2003, over 1,000 people attended the official opening celebration at Laxgalt'sap. From there a convoy — 28 kilometres long — traveled to Gingolx where it was greeted by Nisga'a drummers, dancers, and a traditional community feast. The event marked completion of one of the most geotechnically challenging roads in British Columbia and realization of a dream for Nisga'a people.

### enTel

In an interconnected, global economy, access to modern, high-speed telecommunication is critical for the advancement of Nisga'a citizens, government, and entrepreneurs. To meet this need, Nisga'a Lisims Government has developed a new telecommunications company, enTel Communications Inc., to bring broadband internet access to the Nass Valley.

enTel's core objective is to connect all four Nisga'a communities to a fibre optic network and gain competitive access to Terrace. During the reporting period, enTel applied for and acquired non-dominant carrier status with the CRTC, and built fibre optic connections to all major buildings in the Nass Valley — including health centres, schools, village government offices, and recreation centres. This network will extend to both Laxgalts'ap and Gingolx by the end of 2005.

Down the road, service to individual homes will be improved with enhanced cable access. The system will also support a community channel, which will broadcast live legislative proceedings from Wilp Si'ayuukhl Nisga'a — giving all Nisga'a people the ability to better observe and participate in the workings of their government.

# Hlgu Wilksihlgum Hlbin Whale Princess

Emma Nyce **Age: 77. Tribe: Eagle / Beaver. Home: Gitwinksihlkw.**

My grandmother wouldn't allow me to go to residential school. She said, 'I'm going to teach you how to prepare food and clothes.' And that's exactly what I'm doing now; making sweaters and spinning. While we were doing that, she told me about our history.

I had seven daughters and three sons. I always tell them, 'If you lose our language, you won't even know who you are. You'd better teach those grandkids. It's really important that we hold on to the language and not be ashamed of it.

About five years ago, I went down to Ottawa with the treaty negotiators. We saw our Nisga'a artifacts in the Museum of Civilization. They pulled opened the doors and the man said, 'There's your people.' That's what he said to us. Oh God, it was really something.

We saw spoons made of goat horns, tools for making oolichan grease, cedar clothes, capes, aprons, bentwood boxes, and all kinds of regalia. It was awesome. I imagined my people wearing the clothes and using these things. We were speechless. When the museum is built here in the valley, the artifacts will return.

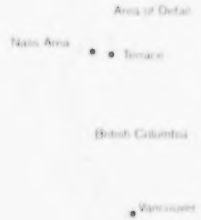
The treaty has been good for the Nisga'a people. Before the treaty, the elders didn't get fish. After the treaty, when they started the Inland Fishery, they set aside the marked fish for the elders and those who have no boats. I got quite a few. Beautiful, gorgeous fish. It's a big help. We do a lot of trading. We trade for halibut, clams, cockerels, and red snapper.

Being able to govern ourselves is a good thing. But some people don't like it because they don't want to work hard... A lot of people are now thinking about education. If they get an education, this will change. We hoped the treaty would make us more self-sufficient. That's what we wanted it for! We prayed about it... Our ancestors said, 'Go outside and you'll find something there. It's not going to come in here and say, here I am, take me!' You've got to go out and look for it.

Now I'm a member of the Council of Elders. We talk about what's important to our nation, like our schools or the elders. We remind them not to mistreat the animals or fish. We make sure the government is doing what it's supposed to do. We let them know we're watching.

I see a good future for my grandchildren. Most of them say, 'When I'm educated, I'm coming home.'

We make sure the government is doing what it's supposed to do.



**Area of Detail**

Note: This map is not to scale and is for general information purposes only. Within the area of detail there are private lands owned by the Nisga'a Nation and others (not shown).

Roads and Highways

Nisga'a Highway

Nisga'a Highway Kincolith Extension Project

Nass Area
(includes Nass Wildlife Area)

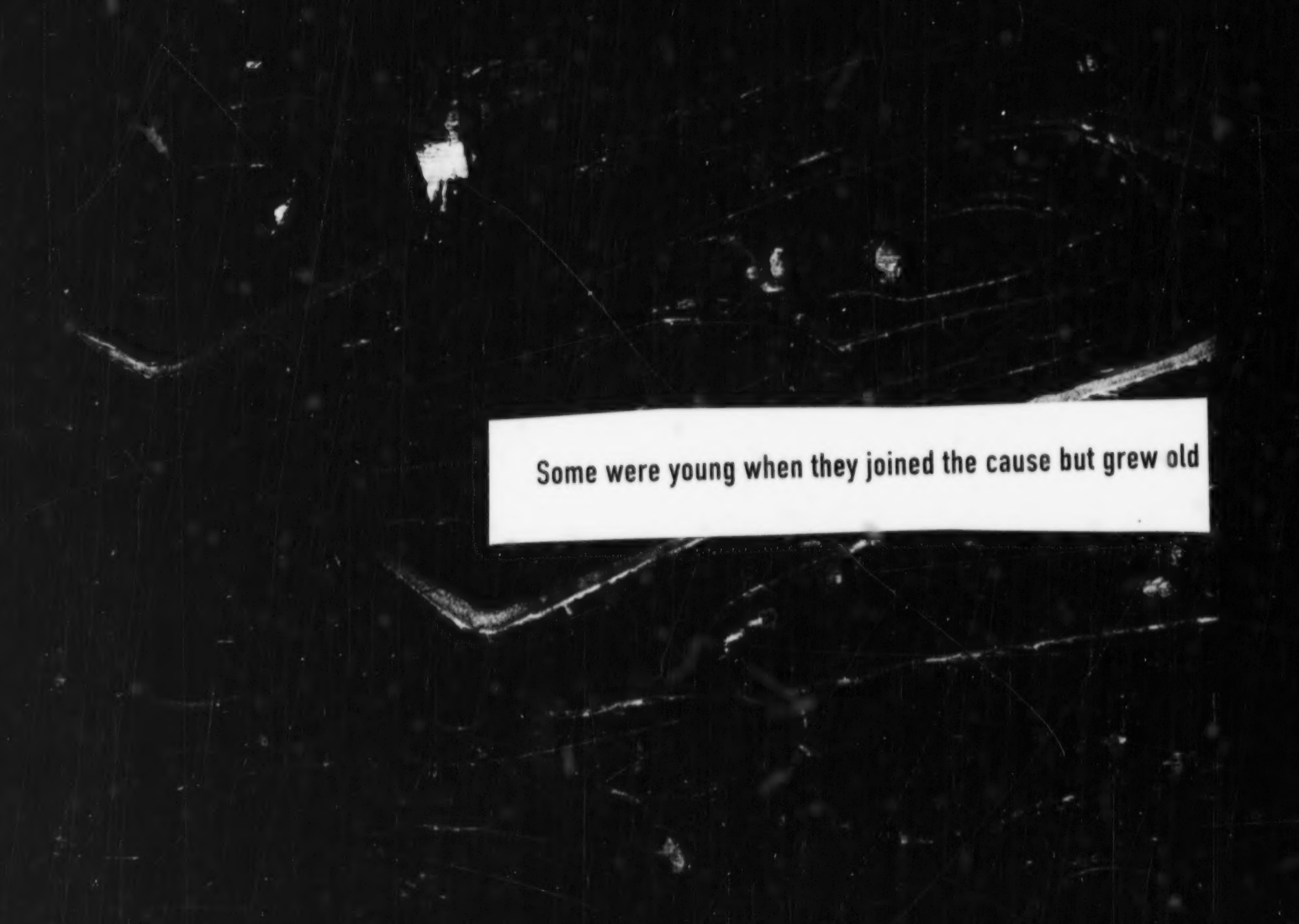
Nass Wildlife Area
(includes Nisga'a Lands)

Nisga'a Lands

Nisga'a Memorial
Lava Bed Park
(Anhluut'ukwsim Laxnitł
Angwinga'asanskwhl Nisga'a)

Gingetl Creek
Ecological Reserve No. 115

Waterways


Some were young when they joined the cause but grew old